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Stairway To Hell: The 500 Best Heavy Metal Albums In The Universe



Synopsis

This irreverent and hilarious guide to all that's loud, vulgar, fast, violent, pissed-off, and adolescent in the music of the last forty years; the first book to prefigure the emerging "alternative" culture of the 1990s; has now been updated with the hundred best metal albums of the decade.

Book Information

Paperback: 150 pages

Publisher: Three Rivers Press; 1st edition (June 4, 1991)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0517575418

ISBN-13: 978-0517575413

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 7.8 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 2.6 out of 5 stars 48 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #516,558 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #192 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Heavy Metal](#) #740 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Reference](#) #1693 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Rock](#)

Customer Reviews

YA-- Eddy rates what he considers to be the best heavy metal albums from the 1960s to present day, with a focus on the period between 1970-1980. His style of writing is raw and rough, and he is full of opinions about the music and the groups playing it. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

As many have written there are like 10 maybe if that metal albums in here. I only looked at this book@the library it's just a nonsense title he writes very strange couldn't understand what the hell he was trying to say about Teena Marie? Also did I say he had some of the worst bands in here total nonsense! This guy had no clue what metal is & believe me I know I am 47 years old I have listened to metal since it started. OK this is long enough just borrow this from the library unless you want to own this book of non metal music. LOL!!!

Man, that was \$20 ill-spent. A list of 500 of the best anything runs the danger of being exhausting and boring, but Chuck Eddy's book makes it so much worse by not even coming close to the topic written on the cover. If you didn't already know from all the other 1-star reviews here, this is

definitely NOT the 500 best heavy metal albums in the universe. Chuck Eddy uses an extremely liberal definition of heavy metal to squeeze in as many non-traditional records as he can, whether it's Teena Marie or the Osmonds or Funkadelic or Prince, and in the process left out some all-time classics of the genre. A possible alternate title that would have made this book much easier to swallow would be: "The 500 Favorite Albums of Chuck Eddy Which Have Some Passing Connection to Heavy Metal, and an Explanation for Each of Them." I get that the standard-bearers are predictable (Black Sabbath's PARANOID, Judas Priest's SAD WINGS OF DESTINY, Iron Maiden's NUMBER OF THE BEAST, etc.) but that doesn't mean they aren't still the greatest albums of the genre. To pick apart one of his doubtful inclusions, yes Prince's PURPLE RAIN is probably one of the greatest albums ever, maybe even one of the greatest 500, but is it one of the top heavy metal albums? NO. It's a pop album with occasional forays into funk, R&B, hard rock and heavy metal, among other stuff, but it doesn't stand among the best achievements in the field of heavy metal. Did he seriously not get this? Was he just messing with everyone, enjoying watching a readership of denim-jacketed hessians shake with rage? Beats me, but his washed-out genre dilution comes off like the crankiness of an old man stuck in an AOR past that just doesn't understand this noise the kids are listening to nowadays. Bear in mind, I'm a 35 year old guy and I'm no kid, and I'm just as guilty of being left cold by some modern metal as anyone, but I wouldn't be so arrogant as to assume it has no place in discussions about the form. Chuck Eddy on the other hand just dives right in with his personal definition and hopes we'll all mistake it for objective truth. This smarminess and dismissiveness is borne out further by his writing style, which mocks most of the artists pretty mercilessly, especially the more obviously metallic entries. Seriously guy, if you don't like heavy metal, just don't write a book about it. Clearly you like some hard rock, as evidenced by the multiple Kix records listed here. Hey, Kix are a fine band, but even you had to realize you were pulling from your personal favorites when you stuck them ahead of Black Sabbath, the defining artist of the genre, right? Maybe not. It's tough to say what goes through the head of Chuck Eddy even after reading through 500 ridiculous reviews from him (and a really closed-minded look at the then-current music scene; that Boredoms listing seems to be based on a quick glance at the album cover and that's it). Anyway, the heck with this book. Chuck Eddy joins Jimmy Guterman as the saddest kind of rock critic: an elitist Baby Boomer snob who doesn't realize he's become the stuffy establishment. Oh, and greatest hits albums are cheating. Pick a real Alice Cooper record. The man's made 26 of them.

I knew right away that the book was worthless when the New York Dolls had one of the top ten

"heavy metal" albums of all time. The NY Dolls are a GREAT -one of the GREATEST- punk rock/glam bands of all time, but they're simply not heavy metal. They, like the Stooges, Ramones, et al. are playing a million different variations of Chuck Berry only faster and more raw. It's got power, angst and everything else, but it IS NOT METAL. If someone of consequence, say a mainstream journalist uses this book as a reference (never happens...) there will be a lot of articles confusing metal with punk rock and all the rest of rock and roll. Granted, Led Zepplin IS metal (right?) and rightly deserve the praise they get in this book but Black Sabbath is THE band that got it all started. Eddy brushes off Black Sabbath like they were of minor significance. He also dismisses Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, all the death metal, speed metal, etc. that's been of tremendous significance in clearly defining what "heavy metal" is. It's not even a funny joke that P-Funk and the Osmonds are included in the book. What's the point in calling these bands/people heavy metal? I mean, rock and roll is a huge tent, but some parts of the tent simply do not mix and it is unfair to have included non-metal bands in this book. It is pointless to purchase it as it is of no value except as a novelty - which means "save your money."

This book is a terrible disservice to an already maligned genre. Black Sabbath is dismissed, when this is the band that started it all (Church of Misery is modern doom from Japan of all places--talk about world influence). Venom is assessed as a bunch of schnooks, who also happen to be the founders of what became black metal. And so the list could go on. How can a book claim to discuss metal without Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, and countless others? Even if Eddy hates these bands, omitting them is a great disservice to the genre. Don't market your book as a review of metal if you are not willing to give the genre its due. And more importantly, attacking a band's style, the personalities of its members, liner notes, etc., while avoiding an assessment of a band's music (read all of Eddy's attacks on Rush--what did this band do to him? Refuse him an interview once or what?), is simply unforgivable. Avoid this book at all costs. My one concern is for those not familiar with metal who will become even more confused after reading this trash. There are so many bands working in so many subgenres of metal (such as doom, death, black, gothic, epic, new wave of British heavy metal (NWOBHM), thrash, progressive, and even alternative) that a book could be written that truly captures the essence of heavy metal. Too bad Eddy will never be the one to write it.

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